

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN THE WORD MEANING  
OF BRITISH AND AMERICAN ENGLISH**



**Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment Of the Requirements for Getting  
Bachelor Degree Of English Education**

**By:**

**RIZKY DINI ARDHITA**

**A320160015**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH EDUCATION  
FAKULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION  
UNIVERSITAS MUHAMMADIYAH SURAKARTA  
2020**

**APPROVAL**

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN THE WORD MEANING OF BRITISH AND  
AMERICAN ENGLISH**

**PUBLICATION ARTICLE**

**By:**

**RIZKY DINI ARDHITA**

**A320160015**

**Approved to be Examined by the Consultant**

**The Consultant**



**Dr. Maryadi, M.A**

**NIP. 1958 03 04 1986 03 1001**

**ACCEPTANCE**

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN THE WORD MEANING OF BRITISH AND  
AMERICAN ENGLISH**

**By:**

**RIZKY DINI ARDHITA**

**A320160015**

**Accepted and Approved by Board Examiners**

**School of Teacher Training and Education**

**Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta**

**on August 2020**

**Team of Examiners:**

**1. Dr. Maryadi, M.A.**

**(Head of Examiner)**

()


**2. Dr. M. Thoyibi, M.S**

**(Member I of Examiner)**

()

**3. Dr. Abdillah Nugroho, M.Hum**

**(Member II of Examiner)**

()



**Dean**

**Prof. Dr. Harun Joko Prayitno, M. Hum**

**NIP: 1950428 199303 001**

## TESTIMONY

Herewith this, I testify that there is no plagiarism in this publication article. As far as I know, no literary work was appointed to get a bachelor's degree from a university. Also no work has been written or published by anyone else, where the writing is referenced by a manuscript and mentioned in a literature review and bibliography.

Therefore, later, if it is proven that there is an untrue statement in this testimony, I will assume full responsibility.

Surakarta, August, 5<sup>th</sup> 2020

The Researcher,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Rizky Dini Ardhita', written over a light blue grid background.

RIZKY DINI ARDHITA

A320160015

# **A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN THE WORD MEANING OF BRITISH AND AMERICAN ENGLISH**

## **Abstrak**

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk (1) menggambarkan tentang perbedaan kata-kata yang berarti antara British Inggris dan Amerika Inggris, dan (2) menjelaskan persamaan kata yang memiliki makna yang sama antara British Inggris dan Amerika Inggris. Jenis penelitian ini adalah penelitian kualitatif, yang digunakan untuk mengumpulkan dan menganalisis data. Peneliti menggunakan teori dari Parera (2002) untuk menganalisis penggunaan makna. Sumber data dalam penelitian ini dikumpulkan dengan membandingkan kata-kata dalam kamus bahasa Inggris Oxford dan Merriam Webster. Hasil yang ditemukan dalam penelitian, menunjukkan bahwa ada banyak perbedaan kata tetapi makna yang sama dan kesamaan kata tetapi makna yang berbeda, misalnya "Celana" dalam bahasa Inggris yang berarti celana dalam dan di Amerika adalah celana panjang. Peneliti menunjukkan (1) enam kelompok perbedaan makna kata, terdiri dari "transportasi, makanan dan minuman, pendidikan, pakaian, rumah dan sekitar, dan ilmu pengetahuan dan teknologi". Terdapat kata yang berbeda makna dan kata yang berlawanan makna. Dan (2) enam kelompok dalam makna yang sama, ada "transportasi, makanan dan minuman, pendidikan, pakaian, rumah dan sekitar, Sains dan teknologi". Yang terdiri dari kata yang berbeda namun memiliki makna yang sama dan keduanya yang sama. Peneliti membuat kolom untuk mengklasifikasikan data yang telah dikumpulkan dengan tujuan membuat pembaca lebih mudah memahami.

**Kata kunci:** makna kata, British Inggris, Amerika Inggris.

## **Abstract**

The objectivities of the study are to (1) describe the difference words meaning of British and American English, and (2) to explain similarities words meaning of British and American English. This research paper is qualitative research, was for collecting and analyzing data. This paper uses the theory from Parera (2002) to analyze the use of meaning. The data source in this study was collected by comparing words in the Oxford English dictionary and Merriam Webster. There found the result of the study, showed that there is different word but same meaning and similarities word but different meaning, for example, "Pants" in British which mean is underwear and in American are trousers. Researchers showed (1) six groups in differences meaning there were "transportation, food and drink, education, clothes, home and environment, and science and technology" the differences consist of the meaning of is opposite and the meaning totally different. And (2) six groups in similarities meaning, there are "transportation, food, and drink, education, clothes, home and environment, Science and Technology". The similarities consist of the differences word and the same meaning and the differences word but have the same meaning. The researchers begin to make a column to classify the data that has been collected with the aim to make the reader more easily understands.

**Keywords:** word meaning, British English, American English

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Every language has a lot of variations. As we know that there are so many languages in this world, one of the examples is English. "English is a language which has its own literature, its own grammar books, and its own dictionaries" (Trudgill, 1996:1). Generally, there are two types of English that is well known and that is used as a reference in Indonesia, there are British and American English. British English is different from American English in some ways, there are differences between British and American English, like: spelling, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. If those differences are not well understood, the English learners will interpret English incorrectly in various aspects. According to Hartanto (1996:362-407) declared that "there are six principals of the differences of language between British and American English that they are in the form of vocabulary, spelling, number, business letter, structure or grammar and the pronunciation is also differences".

There are problem that find in this research is between the English Users, for example in the teaching and learning process, the teacher often talk mixes of British and American English in the teaching speaking or writing, so as the result the students also mix both of British and American English in their daily conversation because the do not understand the differences between both of two languages. To minimize the misunderstanding of the students above about the differences between British and American English also about the consistently to use the two variation of language that have been followed, because generally people will choose one of the variation of language that they want to follow and consistent to use it as daily conversation.

In this paper, will discuss the differences and similarities between British and American English, like differences and similarities in vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, usage, and meaning of words. But the author discusses more deeply the differences in words meanings between British English and American English, because at present many Indonesian students seek knowledge or work abroad, especially those who graduate from vocational high schools. They use English in general or American English (US), if they are in British where the population is more dominant using British English as a daily language then there are some differences in words between the US and UK. For example, in English word, namely "pants". In British English "pants" have a meaning is "underwear" and in American English have a meaning "Trousers". In

conclusion "Pants" have a difference word meaning between British and American English. In this research paper, explain the differences and similarities word meaning between British and American English to make it easy for students to learn the differences a word meaning between both.

This case can be concluded that one English word has different meanings in British and American English, the second problem occurs in translators when interpreting words. For example, Indonesians are usually more dominant using American English (US) than English English (UK) while those used by interlocutors interpret British English meanings, then there will be mistaken meanings of words between the two languages used. That means a word in British English is different from American English but between the two means the same. In this research paper explained the basic words that will make it easier for students to learn, presented data on differences and similarities in word meanings between British English and American English. The study also collected data samples about spelling differences, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar to make it easy for students to learn.

With some problems that occur, researchers are interested in examining the differences and similarities in the meaning of words between British and American English. For example, a problem was found in an Indonesian student who wants to study or work abroad, students will do an interview test when registering, before students must understand about English, then this research helps study and test students' English proficiency by finding vocab and meaning and grouping with the aim that students understand the differences in British and American English, so students understand what the words mean

The objectivities of the study are (1) to describe the difference words meaning between British and American English (2) to explain the similarities words meaning between British and American English. From this phenomenon, researchers are interested in bringing this topic to research. By doing this, the researcher decided that this study was entitled "Comparative Study between the Meanings of English Words and American English".

## 2. METHOD

This research is a descriptive qualitative research. because qualitative research methods are more focused on understanding social phenomena that are complete, detailed so that they become interrelated variables, besides the purpose of qualitative research methods is to develop theories and describe complex realities, to get observed understanding and get new theories that function as scientific work. The data generated in qualitative research is descriptive data in the form of written words.

According to Glass and Hopkins (1984) states "Descriptive research as research consisting of collecting data that describes an event, organizing, tabulating and, collecting data". Meanwhile, according to Whitney (1960: 160) he said that the descriptive method is the search for facts with the right interpretation. So, the descriptive method is defined as a problem-solving procedure that is investigated by describing the situation of the subject and object in the research based on the facts that are now visible or as they are.

## 3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Finding

#### 3.1.1 The differences of word meaning Between British and American English.

Table 1. The differences of word meaning Between British and American English

No	Differences	Word	Example		Total	%
			British English	American English		
1	The meaning is little different	Highways	Highways	motorways	13	50%
2		Shrimp	Prawn	Shrimp		
3		Toast	Eggy bread	French toast		
4		Silverware	Cutlery	silverware		
5		Jam	Jam	Jelly		
6		underground	Subways	underground		
7		French fry	Chip	French fry		
8		Sugar	Powdered	Sugar		
9		State school	Public school	Private school		
10		Pants	Underpants	Trousers		
11		Vest	Undershirt	waistcoat		
12		Apartment	A flat	Apartment		
13		Second floor	First floor	Second floor		
14		Sandwich	Sandwich	Sandwich		



15	The meaning is totally difference	Store	Shop	store	13	50%
16		Caravan	Caravan	Trailer		
17		Biscuit	Biscuit	Scone		
18		Rubber	Rubber	galoshes		
19		Calender	Diary	calender		
20		Braces	Braces	Braces		
21		Jumper	Jumper	Pinafore		
22		Suspender	Suspender	Holds up stocking		
23		Pinafore	Pinafore	Apron		
24		Bathup	Public swimming	Bathup		
25		Cot	Camp bed	Cot		
26		Antenna	Aerials	antenna		
					26	100%

### 3.1.2 The similarities of word meaning Between British and American English.

Table 2. The similarities of word meaning Between British and American English

No	Similarities	Word		Total	%
		British English	American English		
1		Railway	Railroad		
2		Aeroplane	Airplane		
3		Car park	Parking lot		
4		Pavement	Sidewalk		
5		Tyre	Tire		
6		Underground	Subway		
7		Zebra crossing	Crosswalk		
8		Fire engine	Fire truck		
9		Motorbike	Motorcycle		
10		Boot	Trunk		
11		Pushchair	Stroller		
12		Crossroads	Intersection		
13		Lorry	Truck		
14		Petrol	Gasoline		
15		Roundabout	Traffic circle		
16		Windscreen	Windshield		
17		Highstreet	Mainstreet		
18		Caravan	A covered lorry		
19		Overtake	Pass		
20		Aubergine	Eggplant		
21		Beetroot	Beet		
22		Maize	Corn		

23	The meaning word is little similarities	Pudding	Desert	103	94,49%
24		Fizzy drink	Soda pop		
25		Fairy cake	Cupcake		
26		Flan	Fruit pie		
27		Gammon	Ham		
28		Tin	Can		
29		Cilantro	Coriander		
30		Zucchini	Courgette		
31		Spring onions	Green onions		
32		Ice lolly	Popsicle		
33		Peckish	Hungry		
34		Chip	French fry		
35		Crips	Potato chips		
36		Candy floss	Cotton candy		
37		Minced meat	Ground meat		
38		Sweet	Candy		
39		Ketchup	Tomato sauce		
40		Banger	Sausage		
41		Butty	Sandwich		
42		Cuppa	Cup of a tea		
43		Backed potato	Baked potato		
44		Gerkin	Pickle		
45		A mark	A grade		
46		Academic staff	Faculty		
47		Exam	Test		
48		Headmaster	Principal		
49		Maths	Mathematics		
50		Module	Class		
51		Break time	Recees		
52		Primary school	Elementary school		
53		Nursery school	Pre-kindergarten		
54		Rubber	Eraser		
55		Zed	Zee		
56		Full stop	period		
57		Plimsolles	Gym shoes		
58		Queue	Line		
59		Sellotape	Scotc tape		
60		Holiday	Vacation		
61		Grey	Gray		
62		Dressing gown	Robe		
63		Swimming costume	Bathing suit		

64		Polo neck	Turtle neck		
65		Pyjamas	Pajamas		
66		Clothes peg	Clothes pin		
67		Washcloth	Flannel		
68		Kit	Uniform		
69		Zip	zipper		
70		Theatre	Teater		
71		Garden	Yard		
72		Chemist	Drugstore		
73		Dustbin	Garbage can		
74		Broiler	Grill		
75		Toilet	Restroom		
76		Washbasin	Sink		
77		Parlour	parlor		
78		Lift	Elevator		
79		Mobile phone	Cell phone		
80		Programme	Program		
81		Analyse	Analyze		
82		Mail box	Postbox		
83		Speciality	Speciality		
84		Postal code	Zip code		
85		Curriculum vitae	Resume		
86		Odour	Odor		
87		Autumn	Fall		
88		Neighbour	Neighbor		
89		Snow	Winter		
90		Torch	Flashlight		
91		Rubbish	Garbage		
92		Moustache	Mustache		
93		Humour	Humor		
94		Rumour	Rumor		
95		Packed lunch	Sack lunch		
96		Parcel	Package		
97		Trolley	Shopping cart		
98		Harbour	Harbor		
99		Pitch	Field		
100		Draughts	Checkers		
101		Football	Soccer		
102		Draw	Tie		
103		Bat	Paddle, table tennis		
104	The meaning word	Traffic jam,	Traffic jam	6	5,50%
105		Taxi	Taxi,		
106		Pizza	Pizza		

107	is similarities	totally	Burger	Burger		
108			Alumunium	Alumunium		
109			Sweater	Sweater		
					109	100%

### 3.2 Discussion

#### 3.2.1 The differences of word meaning between British and American English

Based on table 1, about differences British and American English supported by Ismail Yaman (2015) in his research, he said that "the mixture of English and American English they use is English which is not a conscious language but a random mixture", it means that many people use mixed languages which are spoken accidentally because they do not know the difference in the meaning of words correctly, so in this study, there are data samples accompanied by pictures to make it easier for readers to know the differences and similarities in the meaning of words between British English and American English.

As mentioned before, many people don't know the difference between English varieties. Even highly educated British and American British citizens do not all use good and correct language varieties. Such differences (Di Carlo, 2013). Despite this, his research focuses on prospective English language teachers at Ondokuz Mayıs University. This shows that they are not learning ordinary English. They prepare themselves to be competent in teaching English to others. Therefore, their knowledge of English must reach a certain level. Even in elementary school. In order not to face embarrassing events in front of students, English teachers must expand their language knowledge and skills to the maximum extent possible.

This research refers to Theory of Use (Parera, 2002: 45) because the meaning will also not be suitable if it is used outside of its use, meaning that each word has a different meaning, such as differences word meanings between British and American English, they have the same word but have a different meaning, for example, "braces" in the British are a pair of straps that go through the shoulders and tighten the top of the pants in the front and back, but in America, a wire device is attached in the mouth to straighten the teeth, whereas the same example is a "sandwich", in the British is a sponge cake two or more layers with jam or cream in between, but in America, it can be two pieces of bread with the filling between them, eaten as a snack.

From the analysis of the data, found 13 words that have differences in the sense of a slight difference in the category, for example, the word "Highway", British is "Motorway" (a double lane road designed for fast traffic), while in America it is "Highway" (main road, connecting major cities or cities), "Toast" in the British is "Eggy bread" (bread dipped in an experienced beaten egg mixture, often with extra milk, and fried on both sides "whereas in America is "French toast" (toast, dry), hereinafter the word "French fry" in British is "Chip" (a long slice of French fries) while in America it is "French fry" (a thin slice of four (usually a potato) made crispy fried, baked, or dried and eaten as a snack), the last example is "apartments" in British are "Flat" (Usually this one is designated or used for holidays: self-catering holiday apartments), whereas in America it is "Apartment" (Suite rooms are formed in e dwellings)

In this study also found 13 words that have differences in the meaning of a completely different category, for example, the word "Caravan" in English is "trailer" (a vehicle equipped to live in, usually towed by a car and used for holidays) while in America "trailers" (powered vehicles pulled by other people), then "biscuits" in the UK "biscuits" (small baked, unleavened, usually sweet, unleavened cakes) while in America "Scones" (small unsweetened cakes or a little made from flour, fat, and milk and sometimes adding fruit), "jumpers" in England are "Jumpers" (usually knitted clothing with long sleeves, worn over the upper body) while in America it is "dresses Pinafore" (A dress like a sleeveless apron worn over a young girl's dress, usually having ties or buttons on the back), the last being "Bath up" in British is "Public swimming pool" (in public swimming pools or washing facilities) while in American it is a "bathroom" (a large room for water, used to soak and wash the body). For the conclusion, on the first finding, the researcher found 26 data that are divided into 2, they are: 13 words (50%) which is included in the meaning is little differences category, and 13 words (50%) which is included in the meaning is total difference category.

### 3.2.2 The similarities of word meaning between British English and American

From the data analysis, the researcher found 103 words which have different words but have the same meaning, for example the word "railroad", in British "railroad" is "Railway" and in American "railroad" is "railroad" they have the same meaning, is it a track made of steel rails along which trains run, and then the word "dessert" in British "dessert" is "pudding" and in American "dessert" is "dessert" they have the same

meaning, it is a cooked sweet dish served after the main course of a meal, next is the word “eraser”, in British “eraser” is “rubber” and in American “eraser” is “eraser” they have the same meaning, it is a piece of rubber used for erasing pencil or ink marks, then the word “Uniform” in British “Uniform” is “kit” and in American “Uniform” is “Uniform” they have the same meaning, it is The distinctive clothing worn by members of the same organization or body or by children attending certain schools.

In this study found 6 words that have the same word and the same meaning, for example the word "pizza", both in England and America is "pizza", it is the basis of a round dough that is baked with a topping, then "Pickles", both in English and America, is a vegetable or fruit preserved in vinegar or salt water, hereinafter the word "Specialization", both in Britain and America is the pursuit, field of study, or skill that has been devoted much to one's time and effort and where they are experts.

It was concluded that in the second finding about the similarity of word meanings, the researcher collected 109 words divided into 2 also namely different words but had the same meaning with the number of 103 words with a percentage of 94.49% and the same word and the same meaning with the total amount of data obtained with a percentage of 6 words 5.50%. This theory is consistent with the theory according to Wardaugh (1992) he states there are three possible relationships between one language and another. First, maybe similar. Second, maybe identical. Third, maybe different.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

From above finding, two types of differences word meaning of British and American English, there are the meaning is little differences they are: 13 words (50%) and the meaning is total difference they are: 13 words (50%). It can be concluded that the percentage result from the findings from differences types are the same. Based the data and also discussion of findings, finally it can be concluded that the similarities of word meaning of British and American English, the data collected 109 words divided into 2 also namely The meaning word is little similarities with the number of 103 words with a percentage of 94.49% and The meaning word is totally similarities by 6 words percentage 5.50%. It can be concluded that the high percentage result from the findings

from similarities types is the meaning word is little similarities with the number of 103 words with a percentage of 94.49%

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- HILL, K., WHITNEY, J. B., & TROTTER, R. R. (1961). Intravenous hypertonic urea in the management of acute angle-closure glaucoma. *Archives of Ophthalmology*, 65(4), 497-503.
- Hopkins, K. D., & Weeks, D. L. (1990). Tests for normality and measures of skewness and kurtosis: Their place in research reporting. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 50(4), 717-729.
- Indah Sukmawati, C., & MA, M. (2017). *A Contrastive Study Between British And American English: Morphological Perspective* (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta).
- Mali, P., Yang, L., Esvelt, K. M., Aach, J., Guell, M., DiCarlo, J. E., ... & Church, G. M. (2013). RNA-guided human genome engineering via Cas9. *Science*, 339(6121), 823-826.
- Martínez, M. A., Gutiérrez, A., Armand-Ugón, M., Blanco, J., Parera, M., Gómez, J., ... & Esté, J. A. (2002). Suppression of chemokine receptor expression by RNA interference allows for inhibition of HIV-1 replication. *Aids*, 16(18), 2385-2390.
- Mihovilovic, M. D., Mueller, B., Kayser, M. M., & Stanetty, P. (2002). Microbial Baeyer-Villiger Oxidation of Bicyclo [4.3. 0] ketones by Two Recombinant E. coli Strains. A Novel Access to Indole Alkaloids. *Synlett*, 2002(05), 0700-0702.
- Wardhaugh, K. G., Longstaff, B. C., & Morton, R. (2001). A comparison of the development and survival of the dung beetle, *Onthophagus taurus* (Schreb.) when fed on the faeces of cattle treated with pour-on formulations of eprinomectin or moxidectin. *Veterinary Parasitology*, 99(2), 155-168.
- Wardhaugh, R. (1992). *Speech communities*.
- Yaman, İ., Şenel, M., & Yeşilel, D. B. A. (2015). Exploring the extent to which ELT students utilise smartphones for language learning purposes. *South African Journal of Education*, 35(4).